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ANTHROPOLOGY IN THE NURSERY.*

MANY of the errors which pervade the educated classes of society are due to the diffusion amongst them, while their memories are strong, and before their understanding is matured, of statements contained in the school books forced upon their infant comprehension, which, although wholly at variance with known facts, become articles of compulsory belief for their acceptance. In the above little book, which we especially select as the most complete, as well as the most exact elementary geographical compendium in our language, the English public, which is always prone to view cheap literature with too favourable eyes, will find some exceedingly puzzling statements respecting the races of men. The author of this school compilation says, "man is adapted to live in all climates excepting those of extreme cold." We need not tell our readers that this is the reverse of the fact, and that man cannot live (and thrive) in all climates. We know not what idea of "adaptation" the child who reads this statement is expected to possess; but the simple fact that the Europeans in Bengal die out in the third generation, contravenes the assumption of the cosmopolitanist. But the most wonderful statement which we remember perusing since the days of Gulliver, is that "the original people of Australia are considered of the same race with the Hottentots of South Africa." This is indeed an original theory; and is nearly on the same mental level as the statement which we heard an African traveller make a few months ago in a semi-scientific audience, that the Hottentots were a mixed race produced between the Dutch and the natives of the Cape settlement. England is possibly the only country in Europe where such a statement could have been made, and we regard such exhibitions as most detrimental, not only to anthropology, but to general education, as it presupposed an amount of ignorance respecting the early colonization of the Cape Colony of which we can only find adequate precedents in the infant school. The time will shortly come when the legitimate desire of the people to give to their children scientific text-books really worth reading may be gratified, and when the teachers who disdain to impart sound elementary knowledge, on the selfish plea, *illos vero indignos puto, quibus rationem reddam*, will find that they no longer address an attentive, or a remunerative audience.

* Geographical Primer (Chambers' Educational Course). 12mo. London and Edinburgh: William and Robert Chambers.